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SOCIALISE!

and the [^]e *i5rl:,niis practically take the place, with ^{us,} of what in Frarlre :f the formal* recognition of an Academy of Letters, and f :iun^tclv make the establishment of such an institution cvrte unnecessary in England. Of course, the public are vtr** r^-'^i^s in their use of the word. That they should have *;!i".-^ VT'-.risv.-orth an immoral poet, vrns only to be tispe'/-:!. Wordsworth was a poet. But that they should haW cui*L«-i Charier? Kinsley an immoral novelist is extra-rr'iinary. Kingsley's prose was not of a very fine quality. Still, there ia the word, and they use it as best they can. An artist is, of course, not disturbed by it. The true artist is a mar; who believes absolutely in himself, because he is absolutely himself. But I can fancy that if an artist produced a work of prt m England that immediately on its appearance was recog-razed by the public, through their medium, which is the public Press, as a work that was quite intelligible and highly moral, lie would begin seriously to question whether in its creation he had really been himself at all, and consequently whether the work was not quite unworthy of him, and either of a thoroughly second-rate order, or of no artistic value whatsoever.

Perhaps, however, I have wronged the public in limiting them to such words as "immoral," "unintelligible," "exotic," and "unhealthy." There is one other word that they use. That word is "morbid." They do not use it often. The meaning of the word is so simple that they are afraid of using it. Still, they use it sometimes, and, now and then, one comes across it in popular newspapers. It is, of course, a ridiculous word to apply to a work of art. For, what is morbidity but a mood of emotion or a mode of thought that one cannot express? The public are all morbid, because the public can never find expression for anything. The artist is never morbid. He expresses everything. He stands outside his subject, and through its medium produces incomparable and artistic effects. To call an artist morbid because he deals with morbidity as his subject-matter is as silly as if one called Shakespeare mad because he wrote *King Lear*.

On the whole, an artist in England gains something by being attacked. His individuality is intensified. He becomes more completely himself. Of course, the attacks are very gross, very impertinent, and very contemptible. But then no artist expects grace from the vulgar mind, or style from the suburban

intellect. Vulgarities and stupidities are two very
vivid facts in
modern life. One regrets them, naturally. But
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